

Veterans Event Remarks by Supervisor Bates
November 3, 2011

Many of those we honor on Veterans Day are the veterans of the Vietnam War. Millions of young Americans who served in Vietnam between 1961 and 1975.

The Vietnam War is remembered as a controversial period in our history. The war coincides with a period of great turmoil and division in our country. Sadly, as a result of such division and turmoil our Vietnam Veterans were not always treated with the respect and honor that they so deserve.

The service men who returned from Vietnam were, as Ronald Reagan said, “sometimes met with the scorn of fellow Americans who were unable to distinguish between our native distaste for war and the stainless patriotism of those who suffered its scars.”

Upon coming home, Vietnam veterans, like all other veterans, had to cope with many challenges. Some had physical wounds, others psychological damage. The veterans had to meet these challenges as they carried out their everyday lives, even as the tragedy and ugliness of war was still a very visible and fresh memory. Added to this challenge was the fact that many felt unappreciated by their fellow countrymen.

As time has passed, so too has the division and hard feelings of the Vietnam era. However, for the veterans of the war, this period will always be a defining moment in their lives. And in my view, it is a moment of which they should be very proud.

Like the heroes of past wars – the Minutemen, the Army of the Potomoc, the Doughboys, and the Liberators of Europe- those that fought in Vietnam are part of our proud history. The soldiers, sailors, and airmen of Vietnam answered the call of duty and exhibited great courage in the cause of freedom and in the defense of their country.

We, as their fellow citizens, should always be grateful to them for their service and proud of them for their bravery. These veterans met their responsibility when they were needed. It is our responsibility to meet the challenge set by Lincoln- “to care for him who shall have borne the battle.”

It is now my honor to introduce one of the heroes of Vietnam- SGT (Ret.) Frank Orzio of the United States Marine Corp. Sgt. Orzio is the founder of the “Wounded Warrior Ministry”. He served in the 1st. Battlion, 7th Marines, 1st. Marine Division in Vietnam in 1968. He is a two time 'Purple Heart' Recipient and chaplain for the State of California's Military Order of the "Purple Heart'.